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in: Witcher190, Organizations, School of the Viper

The Hounds

1
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The Hounds, also known as **the Seekers**, represented a significant effort by the School of the Viper to innovate within the field of witchers through the creation of an elite special force composed exclusively of women possessing an advanced mutation. Inspired by the experiments of the School of the Cat, which had developed an experimental formula to incorporate women into the witcher mutation process, the School of the Viper aimed to take this innovation a step further. Their primary goal was to create witchers capable of tracking and, to some extent, predicting the movements of the Wild Hunt in order to ultimately destroy it—the purpose that defined the school's very existence. However, the project faced exorbitant costs in terms of resources, time, and lives, leading to its abandonment by the end of the 12th century.

The Hounds

Tattoo Used by the Girls Participating in the Project

Information

Type	Witcher Special Forces
Purpose	To track the Wild Hunt by "sensing" it

Contents [hide]

1. History (1020s - 1190s)

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1.1. Origins (1040s - 1070s)
2. Development and Obstacles (1060 - 1140)
3. Extinction (1180s - 1190s)
4. Characteristics
5. Trivia

Location	Gorthur Gvaed, Tir Tochair Mountains, School of the Viper
Leader(s)	Ivarl "Evil-Eye"
Country	Nilfgaardian Empire

History (1020s - 1190s)

Origins (1040s - 1070s)

The seeds of the Seekers project began in the 1020s when the School of the Cat developed an experimental formula that allowed women to undergo witcher mutations—a significant breakthrough considering that, in the original Trial of the Grasses experiments in Morgraig, all female subjects perished. This advancement drew the attention of several witcher schools, which, eager to expand their ranks by including women as viable mutation candidates, acquired copies of the experimental formula through various means in the following decades. While some schools, such as the Wolf and Griffin schools, only used the Cat formula sparingly due to the high costs and lower survival rates for women compared to men using the original formula (1 in 10 versus 3 in 10), the School of the Viper saw strategic potential in this innovation.

Under the leadership of Ivar "Evil-Eye," the grandmaster and founder of the school, the Vipers adopted a more ambitious approach: refining the process to create variants of the Cat formula capable of producing an elite group with an advanced mutation. This mutation aimed to bestow a specialized ability: the capacity to "sense" the Wild Hunt.

Ivar was no stranger to the risks of experimentation. Having undergone mutations himself in his youth, he responded exceptionally well and was selected for even more complex experiments designed to enhance the physical and cognitive abilities of witchers. Among those chosen for these trials, Ivar was the sole survivor, largely because the mages conducting the experiments failed to complete the trial on him.

As a result of this unfinished experiment, Ivar developed his "evil eye," a unique mutation in his

left eye that allowed him to see into other worlds. This ability, which earned him his moniker, irrevocably altered his perception of the multiverse. Through this eye, he witnessed the Wild Hunt traversing worlds via the spiral, leaving behind a trail of death, conquest, and abductions. These visions became an obsession for Ivar, shaping his life and guiding his decisions as leader of the School of the Viper from its founding until his death.

His obsession with the Wild Hunt and the need to develop a way to track it were the driving forces behind the Seekers project. Ivar was convinced that if he could create witchers capable of "sensing" and thus anticipating in some way the movements of this destructive force, they could confront it and ultimately destroy it.

Development and Obstacles (1060 - 1140)

Many of the girls selected for the experiments with the variants of the original experimental formula later experienced severe side effects. These included muscular deformities that limited their mobility, extreme sensory sensitivity, or severe emotional alterations stemming from the use of the feline experimental formula as a base.

Although the possibility of using men as test subjects was discussed in the early stages of the project, this option was dismissed by Ivar. Reflecting on his own experiences with the more complex experiments he underwent in his youth, Ivar believed himself to be a failure of those procedures, having only survived because the final trial was left incomplete. Convinced that men shared a similar predisposition to his, he concluded that this susceptibility made them less suited to withstand the advanced mutation he sought to achieve through the various feline formula derivatives being developed. Thus, he decided to focus the project exclusively on women, believing their physiological differences might open new possibilities. He saw this differentiation as an opportunity to integrate genetic and biological variables that had not been explored in traditional mutation processes. This strategic vision reinforced his determination to design an all-female elite group, though the results would show that the project's difficulties lay not so much in the sex of the candidates but in the inherent limitations of the experimental formula and its derivatives.

This decision, however, was not without criticism. Some members of the School of the Viper argued that excluding men significantly limited the chances of success by reducing the pool of available subjects for experimentation. Others felt that Ivar's reasons were more rooted in personal bias than in conclusive scientific evidence. Despite these objections, Ivar stood firm in his conviction, believing that experimenting with women was a more promising path to achieving the level of perfection he sought. To fully concentrate on his vision, Ivar relinquished general control of the school to his second-in-command, Gheran of Kalkar, allowing him to focus exclusively on perfecting the advanced mutation and training the girls.

Alongside a select group of trusted witchers, mages, and alchemists, Ivar dedicated years to overcoming the initial failures. However, despite these efforts, the results remained disappointing: only about one in ten girls survived the mutation process, maintaining a success rate similar to that of the original experimental formula. Among those who survived, only a minimal proportion managed to acquire the desired ability, making the project an expensive

and questionable endeavor. Over time, Ivar's insistence, combined with the lack of conclusive results, became one of the primary factors leading to the project's decline and eventual extinction.

Extinction (1180s - 1190s)

As the costs in resources and lives mounted, tensions within the school escalated. Ivar's collaborators began questioning the project's viability, especially as Ivar's reports exaggerated progress to justify the diversion of resources the project required from the school. Internal debates intensified, and over time, the division between those who supported Ivar's vision and those demanding the project's suspension became unsustainable. Although Ivar clung to the few successes as proof that his vision was achievable, for many, the project was already doomed.

Ultimately, internal pressures and the lack of tangible results led to the project's definitive closure toward the late 1190s. In an attempt to protect the school's legacy from disgrace, Ivar secretly expelled most of the surviving Seekers, condemning them to wander the world as outcasts. Without access to the infrastructure of the School of the Viper, many faced uncertain and tragic fates. Ironically, some of them found refuge in the School of the Cat—the very school that had developed the original experimental formula and maintained a more inclusive philosophy toward outcasts and the badly mutated.

Characteristics

As previously mentioned, the defining trait that distinguished the Hounds from standard witchers was the acquisition of a seventh sense, achieved through the application of an advanced mutation derived from variants of the original feline experimental formula. This sense surpassed the sixth sense possessed by standard witchers, which allows them to perceive subtle details in their surroundings, such as objects of importance, imperceptible changes in the environment, or even the immediate intentions of nearby people and creatures.

The seventh sense was a far more metaphysical ability, akin to Ivar's powerful yet ultimately impractical "evil eye." It allowed the Hounds to detect fluctuations in the Spiral, which could indicate the presence of the Wild Hunt due to its interdimensional travel capabilities. However, since this sense merely detected fluctuations, it was vague and heavily reliant on each Hound's experience, training, and interpretative ability. This meant that even if a Hound sensed a fluctuation in the Spiral, they might not be able to determine whether it was caused by the Wild Hunt's activity or another phenomenon. This limitation fueled further criticism from detractors of the project, who argued that the benefits of the mutation did not justify the high cost in lives and resources required to develop it.

The ability also came at a steep price for those who possessed it. Many Hounds developed neurological disorders due to the sensory bombardment they experienced when perceiving these fluctuations. Some suffered from intense headaches, nervous breakdowns, and, in the most severe cases, a gradual loss of sanity.

Trivia

- It was inspired by Giusy´s OC Val von Tregano. You can support her here.

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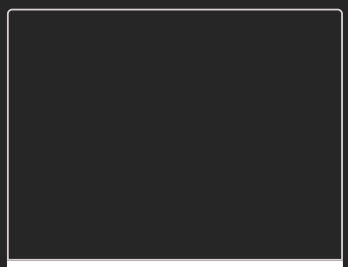

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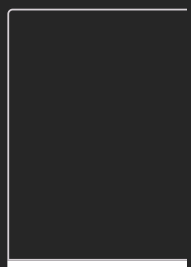

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